Many Sacksful Destroyed

ITT Shredded Files To Avoid 'Misuse'

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The Washington office of the International Telephone and Telegraph Corp. destroyed files which could "cause unwarranted embarrassment if published" after learning that columnist Jack Anderson had obtained a confidential internal ITT memorandum.

Howard J. Aibel, senior vice president and general counsel of ITT, told the Senate Judiciary Committee yesterday that "many sacks" of documents were put through the office shredding machine here on February 24.

On the orders of William R. Merriam, head of ITT's Washington office, the conglomerate's 19 employees here culled through their papers to get rid of those which could be "misused or misconstrued" and cause embarrassment or which were "no longer needed," Aibel testified.

Aibel said that he understood ITT lobbyist Dita D. Beard, author of the memo obtained by Anderson, "sort of got into the swing of things and said, 'Why do we need this?' 'Why do we need that?' "

After an internal investigation that he coordinated, Aibel said, he is convinced that none of the destroyed documents "directly or indirectly" linked settlement of three antitrust cases against ITT with the conglomerate's financial contribution to help bring the Republican convention to San Diego.

Democratic members of the Judiciary Committee were less than convinced, however, and demanded a list of the material destroyed by ITT.

The committee, which completed the tenth day of hearings yesterday, was convened at the request of Acting Attorney General Richard G. Kleindienst after Anderson published Mrs. Beard's memo.

The memo said there was a direct connection between settlement of antitrust cases by the Justice Department on terms allegedly favorable to ITT last July 31 and ITT's offer to help bring the GOP convention to San Diego, ten days earlier.

ITT President and Chairman Harold S. Geneen, on the witness stand again yesterday, continued to insist that there was no such connection.

Geneen asserted that the financial commitment by ITT to

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he San Diego Convention and Tourist Bureau was a 'damned good business investment" and "not by any means a political contribution."

He said that ITT's Sheraton subsidiary, with two hotels in San Diego and another scheduled for completion this summer, expected to earn back more than its commitment during the GOP convention alone.

Geneen also insisted that the total ITT commitment was $200,000. Rep. Bob Wilson (R-Calif.), who originally negotiated the commitment with Geneen, told reporters as recently as last week that the amount was "definitely $400,000."

At the same time, a subcommittee of the Judiciary Committee prepared to go to Denver Monday to interview the ailing Mrs. Beard in her room at the Rocky Mountain Osteopathic Hospital.

Chairman James O. Eastland (D-Miss.) yesterday added Sen. Quentin Burdick (D-N.D.) to the subcommittee, which already had three Democrats and three Republicans.

The subcommittee was planning to interview Mrs. Beard, who is suffering from a heart ailment, for a maximum of four one-hour sessions, two each on Monday and Tuesday.

But Mrs. Beard's osteopathic physicians in Denver objected strenuously last night to the subcommittee's plans and complained that they had not even been contacted about medical questions concerning the interview.

(The Judiciary Committee dealt with cardiologists appointed especially to evaluate Mrs. Beard's physical ability to tolerate testifying.)

"We are going to have an All-American circus coming up," said Dr. Lewis R. Radetsky, an osteopath who has cared for Mrs. Beard for the last two weeks. Officers of the Colorado Medical Association also were reportedly upset about ethical questions concerning the plans for Mrs. Beard's testimony.

In another development, Sen. Marlow W. Cook (R-Ky.) produced a photograph showing Mrs. Beard with Opal Ginn, a secretary to Anderson, at a party at the Sheraton Carlton Hotel here on January 27.

Cook has charged and Anderson has denied, that the ITT lobbyist and the columnists's secretary were "drinking companions."

After reading Anderson's denial into the committee record yesterday, Cook said, "If I owe Mr. Anderson an apology, I will extend it." In the meantime, he said, he is awaiting the results of further research on any links between Anderson and Mrs. Beard.

Senate Republicans continued to protest what they feel is the excessive length and scope of the Judiciary Committee investigation.

Sen. Roman Hruska of Nebraska, ranking minority member of the committee, yesterday labeled it a "smear-a-day campaign masquerading as a Senate confirmation hearing."

(Kleindienst's confirmation by the Senate has been held up, pending determination of whether there were any improprieties in the settlement of the ITT antitrust cases and the financial commitment to the GOP convention.)

Following the daily complaints of his Republican colleagues on the committee, Hruska charged that "the whole thing is pushed along by publicity that is more con-

cerned with sensation than sense."

Aibel, who was called to the witness stand as he submitted his report on the special internal ITT investigation to Geneen, gave this description of the shredding of documents at the ITT office here:

After being confronted by Brit Hume, an associate of Anderson, with the Beard memorandum, Aibel testified, Merriam "telephoned ITT headquarters in New York and requested that a security officer be sent to check the security arrangements at the Washington office."

During a regular weekly Thursday morning staff meeting, Merriam raised the "possibility that documents were being illegally removed from the office files for thepurpose the office files for the purpose Anderson," Aibel said.

Merriam then directed destruction of any files that were obsolete or potentially embarrassing, Aibel said, according to the guidelines of ITT's "record retention policy."

Aibel said that the destroyed material included tourist brochures and other publicly available material concerning San Diego, news clippings, speeches and drafts of legislation

Besides, the general counsel testified, it was high time that the Washington office's files be culled because "man's squirrel-like instinct is to keep everything."

Aibel insisted that Merriam had not told the employees of the contents of the Beard memorandum in Anderson's possession at the February 24 meeting.

At first he testified that only two people in the ITT office here knew of its contents, but that figure was expanded to five before the end of yesterday's hearing.

It was also revealed in testimony that John F. Ryan, corporate deputy director of ITT here, had helped Mrs. Beard go through her files to select what should be shredded.

Kleindienst has testified that it was Ryan who originally approached him at a spring party in McLean, Va., about hearing the conglomerate's "financial hardship" argument against the government antitrust actions.

Then deputy attorney general, Kleindienst subsequently met five times with ITT director Felix G. Rohatyn.

Sen. John V. Tunney (D-Calif.) said that he was "shocked" by the description of the shredding. "It looks very suspicious and bad," Tunney complained. He suggested that sensitive documents could have been "put under lock and key" rather than being destroyed.

Hume has testified that Mrs. Beard told him one of the shredded documents included instructions from an ITT vice president on what she should say about the antitrust cases and the convention support to then Attorney General John N. Mitchell at a party after last year's Kentucky Derby.

After yesterday's session, Eastland adjourned the hearings until next Wednesday, after the subcommittee returns from Denver.